

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated August 9, 2005. Claims 13-16, 18-21, 27-30, and 40-44 are pending, with claims 13, 18 and 27 in independent form. Claims 23-26, 32-35, and 37-39 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter presented therein. Claims 40-44 have been added to provide Applicants with a more complete scope of protection. Claims 13, 18 and 27 have been amended to specify when data is changed or altered. Claims 28 and 29 have been amended as matters of form, such that the scope of these claims have not been narrowed in any way. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Claims 13, 18, 23, 27, 32, and 37 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,832,301 (Yamaguchi). Claims 14, 16, 19, 21, 24, 26, 28, 30, 33, 35, and 38 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Yamaguchi in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,790,282 (Hayashi). Claims 15, 20, 25, 29, 34, and 39 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Yamaguchi in view of Hayashi, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,731,823 (Miller). Cancellation of claims 23-26, 32-35, and 37-39 renders their rejections moot.

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 13, 18 and 27 are patentable over the cited references taken separately or in any proper combination for at least the following reasons.

Independent claim 13 requires an image processing method implemented in a printing system. The method includes providing rasterized color separated contone gray level image data (RIP Data). According to the method, the RIP Data is changed in accordance with an operator's adjustments, such that the changing of the RIP Data occurs while the printing system is printing a print job, thereby resulting in a corresponding contemporaneous change in an appearance of the print job. The method further includes subjecting the changed RIP Data to a halftone process to generate halftone rendered data and outputting the halftone rendered data, or a derivative thereof, for subsequent printing.

A notable feature of claim 13 is the changing of the RIP data in accordance with an operator's adjustments such that the changing of the RIP data occurs while the printing system is printing a print job, thereby resulting in a

corresponding contemporaneous change in an appearance of the print job. Support for this feature can be found in the specification at least at page 6, lines 6-11, and page 9, line 29 to page 10, line 27. An advantage of this feature is that a user can make adjustments to an image without having to rescan or rerasterize an image or having to stop and restart a print job.

For comparison purposes, the Yamaguchi patent is understood to pertain to a printer server 200 connected to a digital copier 1000. See col. 3, lines 3-8. The digital copier includes a scanner unit 100 and a printer unit 300. See col. 3, lines 12-16 and 35-40, which is described with reference to FIG. 2. Printing by the printer unit 300 may occur by scanning an image with the scanner unit 100, which transmits the scanned image to the printer unit 300 for printing, or by transmitting an already digitized image from a client computer 400 to the printer unit 300 via the print server 200. See col. 4, lines 1-8, col. 7, lines 17-28, and col. 10, line 44 to col. 11, line 13.

FIG. 6 of the Yamaguchi patent, referred to in the Office Action (paragraph #3 on page 6, for example), is understood to pertain to a raster-image storage unit 700 within the printer server 200. See col. 5, lines 9-10. The raster-image storage unit 700 includes an image-editing controller 730 and a layout controller 750 to perform “image conversion relating to colors, magnification/reduction/modification editing and the like for registered image data or image data to be registered in the memory . . . [and] real-time layout editing when outputting data to the printer unit 300.” Col. 5, lines 11-22. (The “memory” referred to at col. 5, line 20 is understood to be the raster-image memory 760.)

In contrast to Claim 13, Applicants respectfully submit that the controllers 730 and 750 do not teach or suggest changing RIP data in accordance with an operator’s adjustments, such that the changing occurs while a printing system is printing a print job, thereby resulting in a corresponding contemporaneous change in an appearance of the print job. To elaborate, the Yamaguchi patent introduces its layout editing capability by stating that it performs “real-time layout editing when outputting data to the printer unit 300.” See col. 5, lines 20-22. At first glance, this language may appear to suggest that the Yamaguchi patent discloses performing layout editing during printing of a print job. However, the Yamaguchi patent goes on to clarify its layout editing functionality in more detail.

In particular, the Yamaguchi patent goes on to state that “[t]he raster-image storage unit 700 can control image data in two modes, i.e., a file control mode and a page mode.” Col. 5, lines 34-35. In the file control mode, “[l]ayout processing is performed” and “[t]he resultant data [from the layout processing] is output to the color printer unit 300 . . . to obtain a printed color image.” Col. 5, lines 36-42. “In the page mode, . . . [w]hen performing layout of images . . . , each image data is arranged at a position with a size assigned by the layout controller 750, and the obtained image is output . . . [to] the printer unit 300 via the color-digital-interface controller 790. Col. 5, line 60 to col. 6, line 4.¹ In addition, col. 11, lines 5-13 of the Yamaguchi patent state that “[a]fter registering all of the image data packets, the main controller 210 sets the number of prints and layout information provided in the position/attribute-information table in the layout controller 750. The layout controller 750 performs magnification/reduction/modified editing at the assigned position with the assigned size, and transfers the obtained raster-image data to the printer unit 300 . . . and the printer unit 300 outputs a corresponding printed image” In view of the above descriptions, Applicants understand the the Yamaguchi patent to teach performing layout editing first, and, once layout editing is completed, outputting the laid-out image data to the printer unit 300 for printing. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the Yamaguchi patent does not teach or suggest changing RIP data in accordance with an operator’s adjustments, such that the changing occurs while a printing system is printing a print job, thereby resulting in a corresponding contemporaneous change in an appearance of the print job.

For at least the above-discussed reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 13 is patentable over the Yamaguchi patent. None of the other cited references, taken separately, or in any proper combination with or without the Yamaguchi patent, are believed to teach or suggest all of the features of Claim 13 for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, Claim 13 is respectfully submitted to be patentable over these references as well.

¹ Applicants note that they have changed the phrase “output from the printer unit 300” to --output to the printer unit 300-- in the quotation of col 6, line 3 as it appears that “from” the printer unit 300 is a typographical error. In particular, the paragraph at col 5, lines 23-26, states that “[w]hen outputting image data stored in the memory to the digital color copier 1000, the image data is transferred to the color printer unit 300 via a color-digital-interface controller 790 to obtain a printed image.” (emphasis added). Consonant with the paragraph at col 5, lines 23-26, Applicants

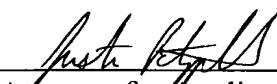
Independent claims 18 and 27 include the same or a similar feature of changing RIP data in accordance with an operator's adjustments, such that the changing occurs while a printing system is printing a print job, thereby resulting in a corresponding contemporaneous change in an appearance of the print job, as discussed above with respect to Claim 13. Accordingly, these claims are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons.

The other rejected claims in this application depend from one of the independent claims discussed above and therefore, are submitted to be patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, individual consideration or reconsideration, as the case may be, of the patentability of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

This Amendment After Final Action is believed to place this application in condition for allowance and, therefore, its entry is believed proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment After Final Action, as an earnest effort to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues, is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe that issues remain outstanding, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact Applicants' undersigned attorney in an effort to resolve such issues and advance the case to issue.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and the allowance of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,



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If the Examiner is unable to reach the Applicant(s) Attorney at the telephone number provided, the Examiner is requested to communicate with Eastman Kodak Company Patent Operations at (585) 477-4656.

understand the paragraph at col. 6, lines 1-4 to be intended to state that image data is output to the printer unit 300 (and not from the printer unit 300) via the color-digital-interface controller 790.